

PSALM 46:1-11 - Restless

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¹God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ²Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea; ³though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult. Selah

⁴There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High. ⁵God is in the midst of the city; it shall not be moved; God will help it when the morning dawns. ⁶The nations are in an uproar, the kingdoms totter; he utters his voice, the earth melts. ⁷The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

⁸Come, behold the works of the Lord; see what desolations he has brought on the earth. ⁹He makes wars cease to the end of the earth; he breaks the bow, and shatters the spear; he burns the shields with fire. ¹⁰"Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth." ¹¹The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. Selah

"Be still and know that I am God." (Ps. 46:10). Whenever I hear the words, "Stillness" or "Be still" associated with God, I get fidgety. Maybe it's because behind those words, I hear my mother's voice whispering "Sit still!" and this usually happened while we were in church. I get fidgety also because stillness is an objective impossibility (try stopping the earth's rotation!). When the Psalmist invites us to 'be still,' there must be a little wiggle room there. He speaks of stillness as a kind of movement toward God – a circling back from distraction and chaos to that priceless treasure beneath us in every moment, any time, in any place. Stillness is that journey to the alpha and omega point described by Annie Dillard as that place that is "lower than metals and minerals. . . lower than salts and earths . . . [beneath] the waxy deepness of planets." That place of stillness "in touch with the Absolute, at base," Dillard calls "Holy the Firm." The Psalmist calls us to that holy place beneath and beyond the stillness of death itself, to that holiest of all foundations, to a vital stillness, a living stillness, a pulsing ecstasy, a place of rebirth and resurrection, a fiery core of new life and oddly enough, a place of repose and rest for our frantic souls. St. Augustine speaks of such stillness when he cries out, "My soul is restless until it finds its rest in thee, O God." Who doesn't want that?